



For informational Purposes
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Security Threat Group Prevention, Identification and Management Strategy

Reforms lessen reliance on long-term SHU housing

In 2007, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) began revising its gang validation and Security Housing Unit (SHU) confinement policies and procedures. This effort resulted in the “Security Threat Group Prevention, Identification and Management Strategy.” CDCR is fully committed to permanently incorporate these revisions into policy.

The security threat group policy also took into account the recommendations and feedback inmates provided during the two hunger strikes in 2011. The security threat group program provides individual accountability of offenders, limited segregation placement criteria for security threat group associates, is behavior-based, incorporates additional elements of due process to the validation system and provides a Step-Down Program as an alternative for inmates to demonstrate their willingness to refrain from criminal gang behavior.

This complex retooling of CDCR’s gang management strategy supports CDCR’s goals of reducing long-term SHU confinement for those offenders who do not engage in gang behavior.

Security Threat Groups

- The new policy replaces the word “gang” with the more nationally accepted term “security threat group.” The Security Threat Group (STG) program does not take a “one size fits all approach,” but better identifies, assesses and prioritizes security threat groups (prison gangs, street gangs, disruptive groups) based on behavior and on the level of threat the group and its affiliates present to the safety and security of prisons and the public.
- CDCR categorizes criminal gangs into STGs based on a threat assessment conducted by the department’s Office of Correctional Safety. STG behavior is defined as documented behavior that promotes, furthers or assists a security threat group.
- An STG-I designation is used for criminal gangs that pose a greater threat. It includes traditional prison gangs and disruptive groups with a history of violence or influence over subservient groups. These STG groups include, but may not be limited to, traditional prison gangs like the Aryan Brotherhood, the Black Guerilla Family, the Mexican Mafia, the Nazi Low Riders, the Northern Structure, and the Nuestra Familia. An STG-I designation may also include a gang with a history and propensity for violence and/or influence over subservient STGs. CDCR will review STG-I designations at least every two years.
- An STG-II designation may be used for traditional disruptive groups and street gangs. These can include the Crips, the Bloods, the 2-5s, the Northern Riders, MS 13, the Norteños, the Sureños, Florencia 13 and white supremacist groups.



Validation

- The validation process is a strategy for identifying and documenting criminal gang member, associates and suspects.
- STG associates – the majority of inmates housed in SHUs – are no longer placed in a SHU based solely upon their validation to an STG unless there is a nexus to confirmed gang activity.
- CDCR added an objective point-based component in the offender validation process and enhanced considerations of due process. Each source item is now given a weighted point value between two and seven points, and individual validation must include three independent sources with a cumulative total of 10 points or more.
- Unsubstantiated confidential information from a single source will not establish a foundation for confirming the existence of STG-related behavior.

Step-Down Program

- The Step-Down Program enables an inmate serving an indeterminate SHU term to ultimately earn his way back to a general population or sensitive needs yard. The revised policy reduces the six-year inactive review policy for release to a general population to a four-year program. Additionally, inmates demonstrating positive behavior and participation may have their length of participation further reduced to three years.
- The Step-Down Program is an incentive-based, multi-step process for STG offenders who choose to discontinue criminal and/or gang activity. Offenders can always choose to drop out of a gang; however, in the Step-Down Program, inmates are not required to drop out of their gang.
- The five-step program supports, educates and increases privileges for SHU inmates who refrain from gang behavior and are disciplinary-free. Each step is progressive and requires the willingness of the inmate to participate. Each offender is responsible for demonstrating he can be released to a less restrictive environment while abstaining from criminal behavior.
- In the fifth step, inmates are observed and monitored in a general population facility.

Case-by-Case Reviews

- As part of the implementation of the pilot, CDCR is conducting case-by-case reviews of all STG affiliates currently serving an indeterminate SHU term.
- CDCR has endorsed for release to its general population more than half of the SHU inmates who have been reviewed so far.
- As of September 30, 2013, CDCR has conducted 528 case-by-case reviews of validated STG affiliates; 343 inmates housed in the SHU or an Administrative Segregation Unit have been approved for Step 5 and/or general population facilities and 150 inmates have been placed in various phases of the Step-Down Program with increased privileges.



Debriefing

- Debriefing is a comprehensive process by which CDCR determines whether an STG member or associate has dropped out of a gang. This new policy does not alter the existing process.
- CDCR will always support offenders who want to disavow or disengage from the gang lifestyle.
- If an offender in the Step-Down Program decides to drop out of his gang, he will not be required to complete the Step-Down Program but will be housed in the Transitional Housing Unit for transition and support.

CDCR will continue to identify, track, monitor and apply disciplinary sanctions when inmates are found to be guilty of participating in unlawful and/or gang activity; however, the new policy adds prevention and diversion strategies.

For more information about the STG program, including the instructional memo approved by the Office of Administrative Law on October 18, 2012 and filed with the Secretary of State, visit <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/stg/>.

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